

The Honorable Jed S. Rakoff
U.S. District Court Judge
Southern District of New York
Daniel Patrick Moynihan U.S. Courthouse
500 Pearl Street
New York, New York 10007-1312

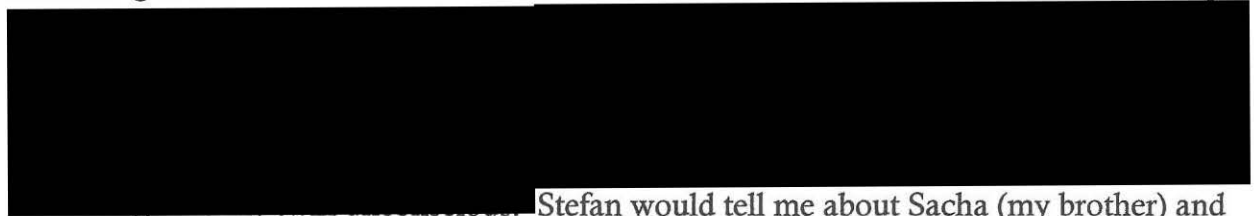
Dear Judge Rakoff,

My name is Vanessa Penson and I am writing to you today on behalf of Stefan Lumiere, and perhaps illustrate to you another side or sides of Stefan you may not have gotten to know in the courtroom setting.

Like Stefan, I grew up in New York City. I am the youngest of six children, and have a twin brother. I currently live in Long Island and work as an Area Director of Sales for two hotels in the area.

I have known Stefan for about 33 years. Our parents were friends and introduced me and my twin brother to Stefan, his brother Justin and sister Erica, as we were all about the same age. I was 12 the summer we met. For the first couple of years that we knew each other we were primarily summer friends. The five of us were inseparable for 2-3 months and then went our separate ways come the fall and start of the school year. As we moved into high school, though not always in the same city, we became more than summer friends. In my 20's I dated Stefan's brother Justin for four years. During that time my contact with Stefan was daily. After his brother and I broke up, Stefan not only remained my friend, but remained a close confidant who I still saw weekly. The breakup had not been very amicable, as breakups can be, but Stefan took no part of the fight, and refused to choose sides---even if one side was his best friend and brother. Over the last few years our contact has been less regular, as lives often can take people in different directions, but no less devoted. Birthday and holiday greetings, messages just to say hello, whatever the case, there was never a moment I didn't feel like I could pick up the phone and call to talk, ask advice or a favor.

I would easily call Stefan more than a friend, more like family. When I think of Stefan, my first thought is kindness. Stefan is one of the kindest men I know. When I was fifteen my



Stefan would tell me about Sacha (my brother) and what it was like seeing him there in the hospital. I see the man he is now and I still think of that 16-year-old kid who was willing to just sit with me, holding my hand, day after day until I was ready to see my brother.

He has grown from a good kid to a kind, true and loyal man. I don't know if you recall, in August of 2003, NYC (and much of the east coast) suffered a black out. Just a few years

after 911, the blackout caused quite a scare, as we didn't know if this was another terrorist attack or what. I remember leaving my job in midtown (I was working in jewelry at the time) and walking my way uptown to where I lived then on west 72nd street. None of my immediate family lived in NYC at that point. I walked and almost without thinking I headed to Stefan's apartment. Though we hadn't really spoken recently, I had no doubt Stefan would take me in and make me feel safe on that confusing, dark night. And he did. He opened his door and invited me in as if he had been doing it every day. He didn't question my decision or my presence. He opened his door and gave me that kind, amazing smile. And that was that. Kind, true, loyal.

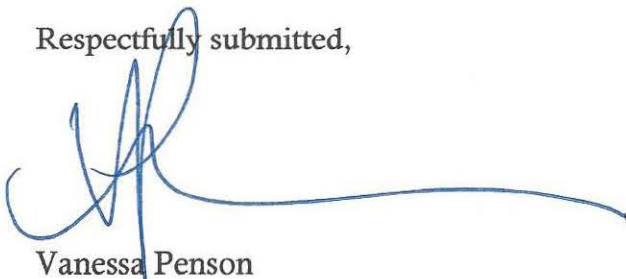
Stefan is loyal to those around him. He is one of the most trusting, hardworking and trustworthy people I have ever known. Just the other day Stefan called me to get my older brother's contact information. My brother is an attorney. It seems someone close to Stefan needed a lawyer, and so Stefan took it upon himself to not only get the contact information, but to then call my brother on this person's behalf. Even in the midst of all he has been going through the last months, have his own court dates and affairs to deal with, he took the time out to help someone else, instead of just passing along the contact information.

One last thing about me. I love a good fight. I've been called a contrarian. I've, admittedly, often played devil's advocate. In the more than three decades that I have known Stefan, I can remember only one disagreement, argument. Today, I can't for the life of me remember what it was about. I seem to recall something silly about using a telephone. Clearly the disagreement was something tantamount to siblings fighting. I can't say there is anybody else on this planet that I have spent as much time with, over so many years, that I have only had one argument with and that is definitely due to and is a testament to Stefan's kind, calm, good-hearted nature.

I hope I have been able to show you a little more about Stefan and the kind of person he is to so many people, like me. I am also writing to you today to ask you to be compassionate in your sentencing. Please know that in addition to the Stefan that has been described in your courtroom, he is a kind, loyal, trusting, trustworthy person. Please take this side of him into account.

I sincerely appreciate the time you have given me and my words.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Vanessa Penson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Vanessa Penson